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Neglecting for a moment the additional furnishings of the more urbanized and well to do, one may declare the domestic equipment within the house to be almost entirely pre-Columbian. The kitchen is the center of domestic activity, and around it cluster most of the accessories. Four features are inevitably present in all houses, of whatever poverty or pretensions. These four features vary hardly at all in form or position,[1] and preserve, hardly modified at all, pre-Columbian form and function. These four are the hearth, the griddle, the grinding-stone, and the pot. The hearth (S. *tlequil;* N. *tlequilitl*) is sometimes no more than three stones set in a triangle to support the griddle; but more often it is of many stones, plastered, and horseshoe shaped. Upon it fits the griddle (S. *comal;* N. *comalli*), a flat, circular tray, which occurs in only one diameter (about eighteen inches). Although griddles of iron are common in the cities, in Tepoztlán they are always of clay. When not in use the griddle stands on edge at the back of the *tlequil.* The three-legged grinding-stones (S. *metate;* N. *metlatl*) with their long handstone (S. *metlapil;* N. *metlapilli*) are of the well-known pattern. They are of andesite. The pot in which the maize is cooked (S. *olla de nixtamal;* N. *nexcomitl*) stands beside the hearth.

In some houses the *tlequil,* which burns wood, is supplemented by the brazier (S. *brasero*) of Spanish origin. This burns charcoal. It may be of iron and brought from the city, or it may be a homemade copy

[1] Cf. Bandelier, *op. cit.*, p. 138; Starr, *Notes on the Ethnography* . . . . , p. 3.

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the pitcher (S. *jarro*) and the saucer (S. *cazuela*) are more European than Indian and are mentioned by the Spanish names only.

Minor elements in the culinary paraphernalia are the shallow wooden boat-shaped mixing bowl (S. *batea*), the wooden spoon (S. *batedor*), and the small, rectangular, handled fan (S. *aventador*) with which the fire is blown up. For picking fruit from trees a cage-like picker of cane, on the end of a long pole, is employed. This is called (S.) *canastilla* or (N.) *acatecomatl*.

Other house furnishings vary considerably with the wealth and education of the owner. Characteristically, however, the bed (S. *cama;* N. *tlapechtli*) is a mat (S. *petate;* N. *petlatl*) spread on the ground or on a low wooden platform. Often another aboriginal form of bed is used: splints of Mexican *bambú* (S. *otate;* N. *ohtlatl*) are stretched in both directions across a framework of low posts driven in the ground. Tables are common but often absent in poorer houses. The backed chair is not rare, but much commoner is the low, backless bench. Although occasionally reminiscent of the pre-Columbian *icpalli*, it nevertheless is generally European in form. No adult sleeps in a hammock, but babies are usually cradled in a flat, swinging framework which is homemade. This resembles other Indian cradle-frames, but bears the Taino name *hamaca*.

Certain domestic accessories of European origin have become firmly associated with the aboriginal elements and are always found in the house. Chief among these are the steel knife, the small iron kerosene flare

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(S. *candil*), the candle, and the alcohol tin (S. *bote*) in which water is carried and stored. Two of these tins are yoked together and swung over the shoulder. In this device (S. *aguantador*), of course European in character, water is hauled by the men. A woman carries only a single tin.

A domestic shrine is found in most houses. This may be no more than a printed or painted picture of a saint, but more commonly it is a carved and painted wooden figure, usually a Virgin or a Christ. This may be only a few inches high, or as much as six feet. Most are from early Colonial times. In front of this figure an incense burner (S. *sahumeria;* N. *popochcomitl*) is placed. This is of black glazed pottery. In it copal gum is burned. Flowers are also placed before the figure, in bottles or vases, and pictures of other saints are hung near the image. This shrine is the center of domestic worship and ritual. Candles are burned before it on feast days; here the infant Christ is "put to bed" on Christmas Eve and taken up on Candlemas; before this image are placed gifts brought on birthdays or those brought by a boy's parents during the negotiations leading to a marriage with a daughter of the house.

Any property not in use is kept on plain wooden shelves or in covered wooden chests. Extra clothing is hung on nails. Walls are frequently decorated with pictures cut from newspapers, with sentimental picture postcards, and with little clay toys and ornamental dishes brought from other villages.

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This description of the domestic equipment relates to most of the houses in Tepoztlán. A conspicuous minority, however, as has already been indicated, enjoy elements of modern industrial civilization. A house of this limited class may possess a few china dishes, or a few glasses, some metal pans, perhaps a sideboard or a metal bed or even a phonograph. The sewing machine alone, however, among modern machines, has become a part of the general Tepoztecan material culture; it is found in all parts of the village and in houses otherwise Indian in character.

Cookery[1] has been but slightly modified by European elements. The most important foodstuffs contributed by European culture are beef, pork, sugar, rice, chickens, eggs, and milk. Less important contributions are potatoes, lima beans, wheat flour, chick-peas, citrus fruits, and spices. The maize-squash-beans complex remains, however, the basis of cookery. These staples were and still are cooked with *chiles* and tomatoes. Honey is still used as a sweetening, but has been largely supplanted by cane sugar. Cinnamon has displaced the native vanilla. The apparatus of cookery and the accompanying techniques are almost untouched by European influence. Maize is boiled with lime and ground on the *metate* to a dough which is the basis of a variety of foods. Chief among these is the *tortilla* (N. *tlaxcalli*), the inevitable griddle-bread which accompanies every meal both as a food and as an eat-

[1] See Margaret Park Redfield, art., "Notes on the Cookery of Tepoztlán, Morelos."

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177 369 terial culture in columns representing the categories suggested.

| | General Tepoztecan Culture | | Secondary Elements |
|---|---|---|---|
| Indian Elements | Mixed Elements | Spanish Elements | |
| **MEN'S CLOTHING** | | | |
| [291] Sandals | *Zarape* | Undergarments; shirt; trousers; vest; blouse; straw hat | Dark trousers; shoes; felt hat |
| **WOMEN'S CLOTHING** | | | |
| (*Quechquemitl; pitzcueitl*) | | The *rebozo* and almost all other clothing | Shoes |
| **THE HOUSE** | | | |
| [342] General form and materials: *Temazcal*, granaries; turkeys | Water-tank | Tiled roofs; hinged doors; chickens, pigs | Balconies; brick floor; iron grilles |
| **HOUSE FURNISHINGS** | | | |
| [354] *Petate; otate* bed; *tlequil; olla; metate; comal; molcajete; chiquihuite; tompiate* | *Cazuelas; jarros; bateas;* benches; stools | Table; candles; oilcans; water-carrier; *machete;* sewing machine | Brass bed; phonograph; oil lamp; forks<br>Backed chairs; Brazier |
| **FOODS AND STIMULANTS** | | | |
| [262] [276] [273] *Tortillas; moles; tamales; atoles:* beans; maize; *chile;* squash; tomatoes, *pulque* | *Tortas;* tobacco | Bananas and citrus fruits; sugar; spices; rice; lima beans; beef and pork; chickens and eggs; coffee; *aguardiente* | Canned foods; beer |

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and although this is the traditional and common practice, it is now considered a real hardship by more and more families. The quantity of water consumed by a family is usually determined by the amount of labor it can devote to water-carrying, and many families limit their use of water for bathing, for plants and animals, and for laundry. Use of the public laundry, generally considered undesirable, is made of necessity by many. The few families with water piped into their patios invariably have flourishing flower, fruit, and vegetable gardens. These families are very much envied, and not infrequently their water pipes are deliberately stuffed or damaged by less fortunate neighbors.

The benefits of toilets are not as generally recognized, and only one private home and the two tourist houses have toilets that can be flushed. The new schoolhouse, however, has toilets and showers, and the younger generation is becoming accustomed to their use. The schoolteachers, the students who have been away to boarding schools, and the not insignificant number of Tepoztecans who have spent time in Mexico City are also familiar with the use of toilets and will undoubtedly be among the first to install them in their dwellings in the future. Some already have constructed screens around their latrines in their yards or orchards to afford some privacy.

Bathing facilities for women and children generally consist of a clay or tin basin at home; the men and older boys bathe in the river. Many women bathe and wash their hair when they do their laundry in a stream or at the public washing place.

No Tepoztecan house has any means of heating other than the kitchen fire. This, however, gives little heat and is extinguished as soon as cooking is completed, to save fuel. In the winter months the family generally retires earlier to keep warm, but since most families have a minimum number of blankets, there is probably some suffering during the night due to cold. Except for early morning, the days are warm all the year round.

There are various means of lighting the house after dark, the most common and inexpensive being candles. Some homes have kerosene lamps and a few of the houses and stores in the center have Coleman gasoline lamps. One Tepoztecan house—that of the prosperous curer, Don Chucho—has electricity which is operated by a privately owned generator. There is talk of installing electricity in the plaza and in the church and chapels near the center, and it is probably only a matter of time before this is done.

Differences in house furnishings are even more striking than differences in house types, and there is an unending variety of combinations of new and old or modern and primitive household items. It is not at all unusual to find under one roof a battery-operated radio, a pre-Hispanic hearth as the only means of cooking, a hand mill for grinding coffee, and the Indian stone *metate* for grinding corn. Modern equipment for cooking, serving, sleeping, lighting, and so forth, is with few exceptions greatly esteemed; and in the majority of families only lack of money prevents its purchase. Among the youth, the more educated, and the large middle economic group, there is a strong desire to live better and to invest

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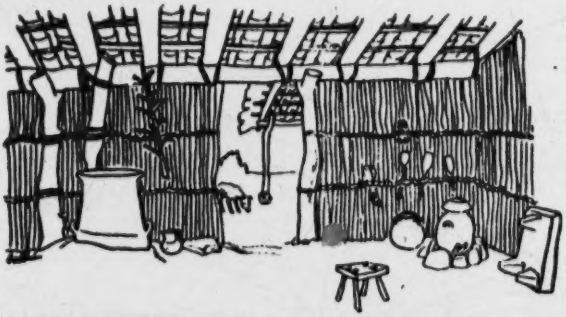
in household comforts. On the other hand, many of the older generation, even those with means, scorn innovations and prefer to live the way they have always lived, investing what surplus they have in land and cattle. The use of modern household equipment correlates more with age and education than with wealth. On the whole, we find modern equipment more frequently in the homes of families with a medium income. In the homes of the better-to-do there is almost always a greater quantity of household goods, whether primitive or modern.



Kitchen in poor home.

Fig. 38.

Kitchen in well-to-do home.

Wealthier families generally own enough plates, pots, glasses, spoons, chairs, etc., to be able to serve fiesta meals to a large number of people without having to borrow, as do so many other Tepoztecan families.

The four features mentioned by Redfield as being inevitably present in the Tepoztecan kitchen of 1926-27 are still found, though with some modifications.[8] (Fig. 38 illustrates the contrast between kitchens in a well-to-do and a poor home.) These features are the hearth, the griddle, the grinding stone, and the pot. Today

[8] Redfield, *Tepoztlán*, p. 35.

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Today

252 almost every house has a hearth made of three stones set in a triangle, or of stones
511 plastered in the shape of a horseshoe, to support the griddle. It is no longer always
354 located on the floor, but is frequently raised to almost table-height by means of a
[177] cement platform. The use of platforms has been stimulated by the cultural missions
[658] that have visited the village and demonstrated to the more interested and enter-
[556] prising women some ways of improving their homes. The *brasero*, a raised clay
stove with two or three charcoal-burning iron grates on top, is generally still
found only in better-to-do homes and is used sparingly or only for preparing fiesta
252 meals. The *comal* (griddle), which in Redfield's time was always clay, is now
571 frequently iron, and many families own one of each type. Though the *comal* is
[415] still an indispensable utensil in every home, the increasing consumption of bread,
especially for breakfast and supper, makes it somewhat less used than formerly.
[412] The same is true of the *metate* (grinding stone), since almost all women now have
their corn ground at the mill. But every home has one or more *metates* for re-
[256] grinding mill-ground corn and for emergencies. *Metates* are also used for coffee
and for large quantities of chile for fiestas. Despite the commercial mills, no
[415] Tepoztecan woman would set up housekeeping without her own *metate*. Finally,
the *olla*, mentioned by Redfield, is the clay pot in which the maize for tortillas is
cooked. To this utensil must be added the pot for beans, another for coffee, and
another for meat. Most families have one large pot to retain the water in which
maize has been soaked and cooked, and the water needed to moisten the woman's
[231] hands as she makes tortillas. This water, which contains some nourishment, is then
fed to the pigs.

571 The remaining house furnishings are relatively few; they consist mainly of
513 sleeping equipment, religious articles, and various containers for storage. For
[352] sleeping there are three kinds of beds: the *petate* or straw mat placed on the floor;
the *tepexco*, a raised bed of bamboo sticks tied together and placed on a wooden
frame or on two sawhorses; and a brass or iron bedstead with metal springs over
which a *petate*, rather than a mattress, is generally placed. The great majority of
the population sleep either on the floor or on the *tepexco*, and only 19.29 per cent
sleep on a bed or cot.[4] The proportion of those who sleep on a bed or cot for Mexico
as a whole is far greater (61.1 per cent), and even for communities of 10,000 or
less inhabitants it is 53.4 per cent.[5]

The majority of Tepoztecans sleep on the floor because they lack the funds to
buy beds, but most of the older generation, regardless of their economic status,
[177] sleep that way by preference. Many an acculturated family has sought without suc-
cess to accustom the old mother or grandmother to sleeping on a bed. Some old
[753] people are afraid of falling off during the night, others say that to sleep off the
ground is to be more subject to *los aires* (evil winds). One old woman told her
grandchildren that it is better to sleep on the floor because it is closer to mother

[4] This figure was derived from a special tabulation of census data for Tepoztlán taken from the Mexican Census of 1940.

[5] Whetten, *Rural Mexico*, p. 291.

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earth. Most of the younger people of the village view beds as a desirable luxury. Pillows, mattresses, pillowcases, sheets, and bedspreads are found in only a few Tepoztecan homes. A wool serape is all the bedding known to the majority of the population.

Sleeping arrangements vary somewhat from family to family, but the most widespread custom is for the parents to share their *petate* with the children of about two to six years of age who sleep between them. This is also true when a bed is used. The nursing baby sleeps on the other side, next to the mother. Cradles are used only during the day. Older children sleep apart, the girls sharing one *petate* and the boys another. In homes with more than one room the parents and small children sleep in one room and the older children in the other; in few homes are there enough rooms to permit the separation of older brothers and sisters. Sometimes parents are embarrassed to lie down together in the presence of their children, and the mother sleeps with the daughters while the father sleeps with the sons.

Most homes have a makeshift altar in the main room of the house. This is usually a table on which are placed candles, flowers, incense burners, and images of saints. These images are highly prized and occupy a prominent place in the home. Some families have large images of Jesus, Mary, or one of the saints, which have been in the family for many generations. Religious pictures are hung on the wall over the table, and frequently there are tissue paper decorations arranged around the table. (See Fig. 39.)

Wooden boxes and one or two wooden chests are used for storage of clothing, blankets, and other personal property. Extra clothing in regular use is hung on

Fig. 39. A domestic altar.

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nails and now, not infrequently, on wood or wire clothes hangers purchased in Cuernavaca. Clothes closets are used only in a very few well-to-do homes in the center of the village. Food, except corn and beans, does not present a storage problem, since it is purchased in small quantities for immediate consumption. A few cans, bottles, jars, and baskets usually suffice to take care of current food. But the more modern or acculturated the family, the greater the number of storage facilities.

The family supply of corn presents the most important storage problem. For this purpose separate structures resembling corncribs are built in the family patio. Redfield describes these as follows:

> The storehouse (S. *troje*) is practically always present, and is usually placed immediately in front of the dwelling. It occurs in three forms, all of which are probably of entirely pre-Columbian design. The *ohuatlapil* (N. *ohuatlapilli*) is most common. This is circular, about six feet high and of varying diameter; it is made of vertical cornstalks bound together with rope. It contains maize on the cob (S. *mazorca*). Also made to contain *mazorca* is the *cincolote* (N. *zincolohtli*). This is square, of poles laid horizontally, one pair upon another at right angles to the first until the structure is raised tall enough to contain the maize to be stored. The *cuezcomate* (N. *cuezcomatl*) is a vasiform granary, plastered inside and out with clay. In it is kept shelled corn.[*]

The *cuescomatl* is now a rarity in Tepoztlán, since most of them have been dismantled or allowed to fall in ruin. They are considered very primitive in appearance, and the few families who still own them are not keeping them in good repair and obviously do not take pride in them, although some of them are over a hundred years old. Now shelled corn is stored inside the house in large sacks made of *petates* sewn together, in large baskets, or in burlap bags.

The sewing machine has, as Redfield put it, "become a part of the general Tepoztecan material culture; it is found in all parts of the village and in houses otherwise Indian in character." At present there are 215 sewing machines in Tepoztlán, owned by 25.3 per cent of the families. This is a relatively high proportion in comparison with other rural areas. The average distribution in rural areas throughout Mexico is 15.6 per 100 families; the average for both rural and urban areas in the nation is 22.5 per cent.

Although sewing machines are apt to be found in the poorest homes, as well as in well-to-do homes, there is a high correlation between degree of wealth and ownership of sewing machines. We find such ownership in 76 per cent of Group III, 39 per cent of Group I–C, and 10 per cent of Groups I–A and I–B. It is interesting to note that among Groups I–A and I–B there is a considerable number of families who own no property except a sewing machine. The few wealthy families who do not have their own machines either have little need for one or have all their clothing made by a local seamstress. The 215 machines in Tepoztlán service many more than that number of families, since it is customary to lend or rent machines to relatives and neighbors, and most machines are in continuous use. Indeed, it may be said that one of the secondary but not unimportant effects of the sewing machine

[*] Redfield, *Tepoztlán*, pp. 33-34.

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men carry their breakfast with them, to be warmed and eaten later. (See Fig. 40.) They may eat once again at noon and have their dinner when they arrive home, at any time from 5:00 to 9:00 P.M.

When they eat at home they are usually served first and receive preferential treatment. The women and children who remain at home eat breakfast at 7:00 or 8:00 A.M., dinner at about 1:00 P.M., and supper at dusk. Younger children are generally fed before the mother and the older daughter sit down to eat. In most homes the

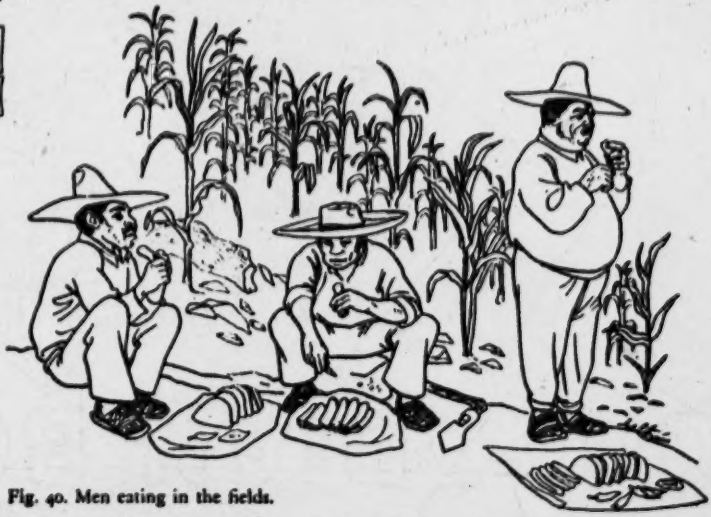

Fig. 40. Men eating in the fields.

members of the family sit on low chairs or stools, or the women and children sit on the floor. Very few families use a table except during a fiesta meal, and then it is only for the men and guests. Likewise, knives and forks are generally reserved for fiesta times only. The mother serves, handing each person his food in a bowl or wrapped in a tortilla. Spoons may be used, but food is usually eaten with the tortilla as a spoon.

For most people, breakfast consists of black coffee and tortilla. Some take milk in their coffee and eat bread instead of tortilla; some eat toasted meat or warmed-over beans. During hard times, poorer families drink tea made from cinnamon or local herbs instead of coffee. It should be remembered that coffee drinking is a relatively new phenomenon among the poor; in the late nineteenth century only the *caciques* could afford it. Today, tea drinking is associated with poverty or illness, for many of the teas are used to cure stomach-ache, colds, sore throats, etc.[8]

[8] In many families it is customary for the father to begin the day with a drink of alcohol. Similarly, when the peasants return from the fields at night, they generally take a drink of alcohol to counteract *los aires* and to avoid taking cold.

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# 17 *children of school age:*

872 GOING TO SCHOOL is the next most important step in the life of a Tepoztecan child. The kindergarten, which was founded in 1935, accepted children between the ages of three and six until 1947, when the lowest admitting age was changed to four. (See Fig. 55.) But only a small percentage of children attended so early. (See Table 56.) Many parents do not approve of beginning school at an early age, for it will "heat the heads" of the little ones. Fear for the physical safety of the small child is another factor delaying enrollment. In one family a favorite, only son was kept at home until he was nine, so that he would be able to defend himself against the attacks of older children. In another, a boy of five was withdrawn from kindergarten because older children had been sticking him with cactus spines. The age of enrollment is decided by parents, despite the law for attendance at age six.

[352]

Fig. 55. The kindergarten.